

“House File 2274 will decrease property taxes paid by all classes of property”

-The nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency, The fiscal note of House File 2274

They Said It

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Iowa Poll: A Register Exclusive Since 1943

60% back property tax cuts

Lawmakers are considering competing plans to lower commercial levies

By JASON CLAYWORTH
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A majority of Iowans favor legislative efforts to reduce commercial property taxes, even if that would mean lower revenue for cit-

ies, counties and schools, according to The Des Moines Register's latest Iowa Poll.

That's money that keeps library doors open, city street potholes filled, and police cars and fire engines on the road, advocates of local governments note.

Sixty percent of Iowans say they favor cutting commercial property taxes, despite the potential tradeoff of less money for local governments. Twenty-eight percent oppose.

Support for the concept crosses political lines. Seventy percent of

Republicans favor the idea, and 60 percent of independents. Even among Democrats, more favor the idea than oppose it, 47 percent to 38 percent.

Support is also up from a year ago, when 53 percent supported

See POLL, Page 11A

COMING TUESDAY

Learn Iowans' opinions about a number of hot topics the Legislature is considering, from banning red light cameras to allowing Internet gambling.

The Des Moines Register, Feb. 20, 2012

“Most Iowans agree with Branstad’s rationale for commercial property tax cuts, the poll shows. Seventy-three percent think that reducing commercial rates would attract more businesses and motivate existing businesses to add jobs.” –*The Des Moines Register*, February 20, 2012

“Iowa’s broken property tax system affects our economy and is an impediment to putting people back to work. Our uncompetitive property tax system is a burden on job creators and prohibits businesses of all sizes from expanding, hiring or even settling in Iowa.”

– Iowa House Speaker Kraig Paulsen, R-Hiawatha, February 21, 2012

Branstad confident in property tax pitch

Governor says proposal for overhaul faces two-sided opposition in Legislature.

By MIKE GLOVER
Associated Press

DES MOINES — Gov. Terry Branstad said Monday his proposed overhaul of Iowa's property tax system is drawing bipartisan opposition as he tries to move it through the Legislature, but he is optimistic his effort will prevail.

The governor said he's negotiating with the Republicans running the House and the Democrats running the Senate and is willing to make concessions to win approval for his plan to end decades of disagreements over the tax.



Branstad

"This is a process of negotiation and we're negotiating with the end in mind," he said at his weekly news conference. "We recognize there are some things we need to work on in the House and some things we need to work on in the Senate."

The House approved a property tax overhaul last week, but only after the addition of a Republican-backed provision to increase the state's share of local school budgets, replacing property tax dollars with state funding.

See Branstad page 5A

Poll shows support for tax cuts

DES MOINES — A majority of those who responded in a recent poll said they favored legislative efforts to cut commercial property taxes.

The Des Moines Register's latest Iowa Poll said 28 percent of those polled opposed the idea. Sixty percent favor reducing commercial property taxes even if local governments receive less money.

Seventy percent of Republicans who were polled favored the cuts. Among Democrats, 47 percent

favored the cuts, compared with 38 percent who opposed reductions.

Gov. Terry Branstad said the commercial tax rates hurt Iowa's economic growth. But opponents fear the affect on city and county revenue.

The Iowa Poll was conducted Feb. 12 to 15 by Selzer & Co. of Des Moines. It surveyed 600 Iowa adults with a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

— Associated Press

The Burlington Hawkeye, Feb. 21, 2012

“Iowa currently has the second highest commercial property taxes in the country. It also has the 16th highest residential taxes in the nation. So the main goal of the bill is to reduce the tax burden on all classes of property, especially commercial rates.” – Rep. Dan Huseman, R-Aurelia, February 22, 2012, *The Cherokee Chronicle Times*

“We expect more from a system that devours half of the state's budget.”

—The Waterloo Courier, February 17, 2012

Iowa Poll

A Register Exclusive Since 1943

Majority support education reform proposals

The Iowa Poll finds backing for key elements of the governor's \$25 million legislative package.

By MARY STEGMEIR

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A majority of Iowans support annual evaluations for teachers, end-of-course exams for high school students, and holding back third-graders who struggle to read, a new Iowa Poll shows.

More than half of respondents say the policies — the backbone of Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad's proposed \$25 million school reform package — would make a major difference in raising the quality of education in the state, an indicator of support.

A 3.0 grade-point-average requirement for prospective teachers, another key provision of Branstad's reforms, also earns strong support from 49 percent of the poll's 800 participants.

61%

Iowans who think evaluating every classroom teacher annually would make a major difference

56%

In favor of holding back third-graders until they can pass a reading test or show proficiency at that level

49%

In favor of requiring prospective teachers to

“A proposal to **retain third-graders** who read well below grade level has quickly become one of the most criticized portions of Gov. Terry Branstad's education reform package. **We happen to see that issue as one of the most clearly logical.** Simply sending people along to the next level when they are not competent at the previous level makes little sense.” —*The Waterloo Courier*, February 17, 2012

“**More than half of respondents say the policies** — the backbone of Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad's proposed \$25 million school reform package — **would make a major difference in raising the quality of education** in the state, an indicator of support.” — *The Des Moines Register*, February 22, 2012

“The poll results that you see just confirm that the Legislature is right to **act in dramatic and meaningful ways to improve our schools.** The public is now telling them that **this is an important issue.**” — Iowa Department of Education Director Jason Glass, February 22, 2012

“*Third grade is a turning point. The early years are so important, if they need the extra time we should give it them.*” — Joyce Gilleard, New London Democrat, Iowa Poll respondent

“... I think it indicates that **Iowans are really willing to look positively on ideas to bring about improvement.**” — Dan Smith, executive director of School Administrators of Iowa, February 22, 2012